



News Release from Congressman

ROB SIMMONS

SECOND DISTRICT, CONNECTICUT

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SIMMONS SAYS VISIT TO CVS PHARMACY WAS WORTHWHILE



NORWICH – On Tuesday, Congressman Rob Simmons, R-2nd District, visited a CVS Pharmacy, on Talcottville Road in Vernon, to gain insights about issues facing patients and pharmacists in the Vernon area.

Congressman Simmons said, “This was a very worthwhile visit. I saw an extremely professional pharmacy that offers a wide variety of services.”

Simmons said he learned how pharmacists provide counseling and guidance for Medicare eligible seniors and others on how to sign up for the prescription drug plan that best suits their needs. The pharmacy also offers guidance on medication management.

CVS Pharmacist Troy Ruff said he believes it is important for Congressman Simmons to understand the important role that a pharmacist plays as part of a patient’s health care team. The staff at CVS said they were glad to hear that Congressman Simmons had a member of his staff assigned to helping seniors with the Medicare Part D prescription drug plan.

“They have a computer system that links CVS pharmacies and that can help prevent someone from exceeding the recommended dosage of medication,” Simmons said. “They are connected to Medicare computers that can quickly verify a certain dosage is appropriate for reimbursement and they have a highly trained staff that does a great job.”

In Connecticut, the prescription drug program is working well. The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services has reported that more than 450,000 Connecticut seniors have signed up for the benefit. Simmons said he supported the “Medicare Fairness Act” to eliminate the financial penalty for seniors who missed the deadline for enrollment because he saw how the program was helping seniors throughout the region.

Simmons said, "I have spoken to many seniors throughout eastern Connecticut who are saving literally thousands of dollars a year in their medication costs thanks to the new prescription drug benefit."

Simmons said it's important for seniors to contact his office or a pharmacist to see how the prescription drug plan could save them money. Prior to the enactment of Medicare Part D millions of seniors across the nation had no prescription drug coverage and paid full price for their medications. Today more than 38 million seniors have coverage. Seniors who are enrolled in the program are saving an average of \$1,100 per year.

In addition, Simmons pointed out that competition among the plans is reducing the cost. Premiums were originally expected to be \$37 per month but competition has reduced that to an average premium of \$24 per month. The health care focus is on prevention and, accordingly, every new Medicare beneficiary is eligible for a free initial medical examination. Medicare covers screenings for cholesterol, diabetes and disease management programs for seniors.

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